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Hefty Niagara

Data points to obesity issues.
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Coldest night

Fundraiser walk for the homeless.
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Opening night



MICHELLE ALLENBERG
/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Lakeshore Catholic High School students rehearse for the Port Colborne school's one-scene, two-play performance showing Thursday and Friday. Here students act out a scene from the play Snow Angel, written by David Lindsay-Abaire. Both plays — the other is Hoodie — are placed in a high school setting and deal with youth issues. Opening night is Thursday Feb. 9 at 6:30 p.m. at Lakeshore Catholic High School performing arts centre. Tickets cost \$10 and can be purchased by calling 905-835-2451 or by emailing nancy.bodis@ncdsb.com.

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LOCAL NEWS

Niagara weighed down by obesity

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

The data is new, but it confirmed something I'd suspected: Val Jaeger has long suspected.

Niagara isn't exactly the healthiest community in the country and is being weighed down, in nearly every age demographic, by obesity.

While the conclusion is not new, for the first time Jaeger has the data that shows from the very young to senior citizens, Niagara residents are concerned about being overweight, and their habits and visits to hospitals bear out those concerns.

"Having it there in black and white is certainly very useful," said Jaeger, speaking about the Life Course

report she presented at the Niagara Region public health and social services committee meeting last week. "It is going to allow us to focus our program delivery in a way we couldn't before because we now have the data."

Jaeger said public health initiatives are generally program focused, but there often isn't robust data to shape those programs on a local level.

For instance, she pointed to the community dental program Niagara's public health department run. It is an excellent and effective program, she said, but it was driven by a provincial initiative using province-wide data.

"So we were the ones who

had to dig down and find out where the program was needed, who needed it, etcetera," she said.

So Life Course was an effort to get a clearer picture of the health of Niagara, using Niagara specific information, that could be used to guide the public health department's efforts in the future.

It took two years of health department staff working every week to pull the relevant data together.

"The information was out there, but you had to go looking for it. It certainly wasn't in any one place before," Jaeger said.

The report, presented to the committee last Tuesday, looks at hospitals visits in Niagara, why patients self-pre-

sented to a hospital, why they called for an ambulance, what they were treated for and the patient's age.

The report pulls together data from 2011 to 2015.

The report shows that for four significant age demographics — 12-19, 19-44, 45-64 and 65 and up — the number one self report condition by patients was being overweight and obese.

Jaeger said a closer look at the data reveals why this is and the health care consequences.

Looking at the top five self reported behaviors in Niagara in those age groups, the report shows people report not eating enough fruits and vegetables, drinking too much and being inactive during their lei-

sure time.

Smoking and "illicit drugs" also cracked the top five for all age groups.

Those behaviours will contribute to being overweight or obese, said Jaeger. But being too heavy also carries with it measurable impacts.

Jaeger points to the top five hospital discharges listed in the report across all age groups.

For age groups 45 to 64 up to 75 to 84, Jaeger said she noticed "arthritis" was listed in the top five.

"At first I thought, 'what does that mean.' I know what word means, of course. I was curious to why it was listed in all those age groups being diagnosed for it," she said.

Arthritis is joint pain

caused by the wearing down of cartilage in the joints.

There are multiple causes of arthritis and is a common condition as people age, but Jaeger said it is also common in people who are overweight.

Arthritis was not nearly as common 50 or 60 years ago, she said, when obesity was not a public health crisis.

Heart disease and other conditions connected with being overweight or obese were also on that list.

Jaeger also noted that a significant reason younger people, aged 10 through 44, were brought to a hospital by ambulance was for a psychiatric condition.

Story continued on Page 9

Port Colborne budget talks running smoothly

LAURA BARTON
Postmedia Network

Annual budget discussions are underway in Port Colborne and so far it's smooth sailing.

The city had one of three potential budget meetings on Feb. 1, and chief administrative officer Scott Lucy said Monday and Wednesday are also slated for meetings.

The Monday meeting was a sure thing, but he had a feeling they would roll over into Wednesday, too.

"We started with basically where our financial position

is right now," Lucy said of the first meeting.

He said staff and council discussed the city's debt and what debentures it has, both in terms of ones recently acquired and those that will be "maturing" and freeing up some money.

Staff also presented their "wish lists" of what they would like for their respective departments, for example, money for buildings, vehicles or further staffing.

Hydro was a hot topic, especially with the cost of inflation. Like residents, there were two

a hit from the rising cost of hydro, he said, citing city hall and the Vale Health and Wellness Centre as two buildings that use up a lot of hydro.

There was some saving by switching the city to LED streetlights last year, but there's still a lot to contend with.

"You don't always have the money, resources and revenue that you'd like to have," said Mayor John Maloney, "but you work with what you've got."

In addition to these discussions, there were two

delegations from local businesses on behalf of the downtown business improvement area, pleading their case for improving and beautifying the downtown core.

"They want to see that happen because they think it will be a regeneration," Lucy said.

The presenters acknowledged the construction would create hardships while it was going on, but that it would be better in the long run.

Neither Maloney nor Lucy

feel the meeting got contentious, although Lucy thought that might come Monday when they really dig into the financial situation and which monies will go where.

Maloney said they're not ready to set the budget yet, adding, "That could happen Monday night or Wednesday night."

The mayor and CAO attribute how well the meetings are organized and how smoothly they are going to director of community and corporate services, Peter Senese, who also acts as treasurer.

Maloney said they receive binders ahead of time with all the information they need, which helps them know what they're going to talk about.

"(Senese) takes us through the budget on a sort of road-map basis, where he covers all of the different issues and highlights the areas where council wants to focus their attention," Lucy said.

Monday's budget meeting was set to begin at 5:30 p.m. at city hall.

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Cops in schools paying big dividends

WAYNE CAMPBELL

Special to Postmedia Network

Police Chief Jeff McGuire is "a huge fan" of the school resource officers program.

It not only allows police officers and young people to talk in a casual atmosphere, it affects the resource officers themselves.

"They are better cops when they come out of it," McGuire told Niagara Catholic District School Board last Tuesday night.

There are six Niagara Regional Police officers working in schools. They are contacts for the police service, students, staff and parents. A couple of officers have even coached high school teams.

McGuire said the program aids both police work and community relations.

"I have seen it make a difference."

The police officers volunteer to work with young people, the chief said.

"They are not just assigned



WAYNE CAMPBELL/SPECIAL TO POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Regional Police and Niagara Catholic District School Board signed a revised protocol of co-operation at Tuesday's regular school board meeting. From left are: school resource officers Const. David Maryniuk and Const. David Thiessen, Chief Jeff McGuire, education director John Crocco, board chair Rev. Paul MacNeil, and education superintendent Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells.

to the job."

Const. David Thiessen, a school resource officer since the program began, said it allows young people to talk with police in an unofficial setting. They get to know officers as people.

"Lots of positive things happen," he said. "You look forward to going to work every day. You see problems solved and resolved."

Const. David Maryniuk, a school resource officer for St. Catharines, said in his 28 years

in policing he has not seen a more beneficial program.

"It is not just what happens today in schools, but what the kids do in the future."

The NRP has signed a revised protocol with the Catholic school board to

reflect Ministry of Education updates to its provincial model for the program.

Education superintendent Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells said the revisions include: bomb threat and lockdown procedures; school and police roles

in violence-prevention strategies; and, threat awareness and management services.

Niagara Catholic students, she said, have benefited from three programs in which school resource officers organized and participated: Students Rock, a guitar competition; Camp Medeba leadership training; and Inter-board Film Fest, to create public service videos.

Education director John Crocco called the school resource officer program a strong partnership that allows officers to become part of the daily lives of students. It is well worth the financial support the board gives it.

St. Catharines Trustee Maurice Charbonneau, a retired high school principal, said he spent a lot of time trying to get the program off the ground and faced a lot of resistance.

Now, he said, having officers in the school is paying big dividends for students and the community.



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POSTMEDIA

I've been thinking about the speed of life

REV. PAT HAND

Brethron in Christ Church

Someone described margin in life as "the space that used to exist in all of our lives between all the physical, emotional and mental pressures of everyday life. And our capacity to respond in a meaningful way to all of the people and circumstances that we must address." Interesting way to look at it, huh? We are all living in the 21st century at the speed of life. You know work all day and race home to grab the kids, go through the drive-thru, make it to the practice or the game. Then race home for the kids to do homework and parents finally fall into bed at 11 p.m. exhausted.

In the darkness of the room before falling asleep they mutter that life will get better soon.

Yet, tomorrow is just as hectic with no margin built in to stop and enjoy the journey called life.

Does that scenario describe your family life at present? Well, you are not the Lone Ranger. Then there is the matter of meaningful communication in the family when you are all together. In a 2013 survey taken by parents where one or both parents worked outside the home some not-so-surprising stats appeared. In the course of everyday life most families shared just 36 minutes a day together in conversation and being together. On the weekend the time went up to about 2.5 hours a day. The 36 minutes a day also included watching television together while everyone was quiet or using a smart phone or computer to play games or be on social media.

Ok, by now you are saying, "tell me something I do not know!" Well, I would like to encourage you to take baby steps in the right direction that would add more margin to every day life and meaningful communication within the family.

First, start with developing a new culture of dinner together at least twice a week. Maybe one of those meals is breakfast together on the weekend. See what's best for you and your family. Can it be done? Will the family cooperate? There are a thousand reasons why this will not work. But I encourage you to ignore those and rather focus on how this can become a reality. If it were easy everybody would be doing it. One family rule would be no electronics for the 30 minutes you are together.

Secondly, set aside five minutes a night or day to talk about what your kids want to talk about.

Admittedly, it's easier to engage younger kids than teenagers, but it can be done. There are a thousand reasons why this will not work in your family. You as mom or dad need to find a reason and a way that works for you and your family.

You can do this, just remember to take baby steps. It will enrich your family and give purpose to what your family is all about.

You will vote all the things that control you and your family instead of all the things that beckon for your attention and time. You will be glad you did.

Valentine's pairings of wine and chocolate



BOB
TYMCZYSZYN

NIAGARA UNCORKE'D

Feb. 14 is just around the corner, and even though its significance will always be the day that Alexander Graham Bell and Elisha Gray filed patent applications for the telephone, or that YouTube, was founded on that date in 2005, for most of us the 14th will always be Valentine's Day.

It's a day when as kids we exchanged valentines, and as adults we buy chocolates and flowers and sappy cards.

The origins of Valentine's Day are a bit murky, with most associating with the commemoration of St. Valentine of Terni, martyred on the 14th in the year 278.

The date didn't have romantic connotations until the 14th century when English poet Chaucer wrote *The Parliament of Fowls*, in which he pens that birds get together to find their mate and it happens on St. Valentine's Day.

Fast-forward several centuries, and here we are.

Cupid's hearts adorn store shelves, a card is a must and chocolate and roses a necessary extravagance.

But there's nothing better than spending a romantic dinner with your significant other.

My friends at Fielding Estate Winery in Beamsville came up with a couple of sugges-



BOB TYMCZYSZYN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

This selection of Niagara wines is perfect for a Valentine's Day dinner: Fielding Estate Winery Sparkling Rose, Peller Estates Private Reserve 2014 Vidal Icewine, and Henry of Pelham Special Reserve Pinot Noir 2010.

tions for people with a sweet tooth.

"White chocolate is very sweet, so you want to make sure to pair it with a sweeter wine, oth-

erwise the wine will taste tart and bitter," said Emily Rabin.

She recommended Fielding's 2014 Riesling,

fruit forward with a touch of residual sweetness, along with a rich mouth-feel and lengthy finish.

I think a fruity Chardonnay or Moscato will also go well. Or an icewine that will match the buttery sweetness of the white chocolate.

Just like tasting wines, we go from light to dark. Milk chocolate contains lots of sugars.

"My first pick would be sparkling wine with chocolate-covered strawberries," said Heidi Fielding.

"There's nothing better than starting off a nice romantic meal with bubbles."

Rabin explained that dark chocolate is not nearly as sweet and can be quite bitter, therefore it should be paired with a rich and full-bodied red wine.

"The wine should still have a ripe and luscious fruit character and shouldn't be overly tannic," she said.

I sampled both the traditional method Brut and Rose sparklings.

While both delightful, the pale colour of the Rose draws my attention for this "holiday."

The bubbles are lively, dancing gently on the tongue. Made mostly from Pinot Noir grapes along with Chardonnay, on the nose it has a slight tartness, and its elegance makes it very easy on the palate.

Absolutely delightful, and pairing it with chocolate-covered strawberries will be the piece de résistance.

Priced at just under \$30 a bottle, there's plenty of time to pick one up at the winery.

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Coldest Night event set for end of month

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Wellanders will walk together during the Coldest Night of the year event Saturday Feb. 25.

Open Arms Mission is hosting the two, five and 10 kilometre walk which starts at the Welland Community Wellness Centre on Lincoln Street. The fundraiser event aims to raise money to support services offered at the Mission. The organization supports vulnerable people in the community. Some services offered include a hot meal every Saturday, a food bank and a hygiene bank.

Last year the organization raised almost \$14,000. This year, Jeff Aitken, Mission pastor, said organizers hope to raise about \$20,000 and anticipate about 200 walkers.

Aitken said in the last year he has seen an increase in the number of people who utilize the organization's services. With the increase in clients money raised is essential



**WELLAND MAYOR
FRANK CAMPION**

to the success of the organization.

Aitken said personally he attributes the increase in homelessness to the high cost of housing and rentals. He said there is also a need for more emergency shelters in the region. There are many who suffer with mental health issues, from depression to addiction. Aitken said when there isn't community support those people don't get adequate help.

Welland mayor Frank Campion, who is participating in the Coldest Night of the year for the first time, said there are a great deal of factors that affect homelessness.

"It (Welland) is a growing municipality and it's an issue a growing municipality has. We see the price of housing going up and the price of rent rising, cost of living is going up. All these things combined make it very difficult for people to survive," Campion said.

What makes the Coldest Night unique is many of the clients of Open Arms Mission volunteer during the event. Aitken said it creates a great atmosphere where there is no "us and them." Campion agreed saying there are no "walls or barriers" and everyone is working for the same goal to assist others.

"Everybody counts ... we all have needs and we need to make sure they are taken care of," Campion said.

*MAllenberg@postmedia.ca
Twitter: @MAllenberg*



TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Open Arms Mission manager Jeff Aitken tries to keep warm during a blustery winter day in this file photo from last year's Coldest Night of the Year fundraising walk.

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The Transportation Master Plan is nearing completion. Since the last PICs held in November/December of 2016, the Project Team has developed preliminary recommendations for Niagara Region's transportation system. Find out how the transportation system is being improved and what benefits there are to the networks (walking, cycling, transit, road), to economic efficiency and to the overall transportation experience.

Residents are invited to attend a Public Information Centre in their community to learn more about these recommendations and to have your voice heard.

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Niagara Falls
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Presentation at 6:30 p.m.

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Eli & The Straw Man take aim at Huntington's Disease

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

By day, Tamara Maluri researches Huntington's Disease at McMaster University. By night, she tries eradicating it with her Niagara band Eli & The Straw Man.

After hitting the road last year for a series of fundraising shows raising awareness about the fatal hereditary disease, the band is back at it on their home turf Saturday at the Seneca Queen Theatre in Niagara Falls.

It's a disease Maluri describes as like having Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and schizophrenia all at once.

"Because my mom has it, I have a 50 per cent chance of inheriting it," says Maluri, the band's trumpet player and percussionist. "It's something that everyone in every HD family deals with, and everyone deals with it differently."

She deals with it musically.

Formed in late 2014, Eli & The

Straw Man has Maluri and her husband Eli joined by seasoned Niagara musicians TJ Rogers, Nathaniel Gould, Phil Bosley and James Glizze.

"Playing is great fun — we'll play anytime — but it's nice to have a connection with the people in the audience."

The band recently recorded its debut album, to be released in the spring.

The Seneca Queen fundraiser, hosted by local musician Aaron Berger, will feature Niagara singer Whitney Pea and include a silent auction.

Despite the serious overtones to the evening, Maluri says music is the perfect icebreaker.

"People usually feel good when they watch music (live), so it's not hard," she says. "You get up there, have fun, and you can tell from the crowd it's a good time."

"I recently went to a Huntington Society conference in Halifax, and it's a serious matter, but eve-

rybody I met there was super positive. I was wondering why, and it occurred to me that only the most positive people are actually going to go to a conference about it."

jlaw@postmedia.com

SUPPLIED PHOTO

Niagara band Eli & The Straw Man plays a Huntington Society of Canada fundraiser at the Seneca Queen Theatre in Niagara Falls Feb. 11.



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Police headquarters building in St. Catharines sold

KARENA WALTERS
Postmedia Network

The former Niagara Regional Police headquarters in downtown St. Catharines is slated to be re-born as a technology hub.

The building at 110 James St. has been sold by Niagara Region to Clickback, a company currently located down the street.

"Our goal is to get some like-minded companies into the building and we're looking to fill it to make a great home. We're all excited about it," Clickback CEO Kyle Tkachuk said last Thursday.

"Being tenant-owner, we needed a home as well for our company to grow into and I think it's going to be a great home. We're all excited about it."

Clickback is a cloud-based software company that provides lead generation software products to

companies around North America. It was founded by St. Catharines-born Tkachuk in 2000 and has 30 employees with the goal to be at 60 in the upcoming year.

The deal with the Region doesn't close until mid-March but Tkachuk said the concept is to turn the building into a technological or innovation hub for Clickback and other established tech companies or new start-ups.

He said other high-rise buildings in the downtown tend to be financial or legal business services so they'll be bringing some tech flair to the core.

The six-storey office building on the corner of James and Church streets was constructed in 1974. Niagara Regional Police housed its headquarters there from 2005 until September 2016, when the service

opened its new \$65-million building on Valley Way in Niagara Falls.

The Region declared the 3,782-square-metre building surplus in June prior to the big move. It had an asking price of \$1,995,000 according to an eight-page brochure about the property put out by Colliers International.

Mayor Walter Sendzik lauded the sale in his state of the city address last Thursday at Meridian Centre. He said afterwards the city will work with the company to help it build the tech hub.

"We want to fill that building with tech-focused companies, wherever field they're in. That'll be the drivers of the next wave of investment into the community," Sendzik said.

When Niagara Regional Police chose to move out of downtown St. Catharines and re-locate to Niagara

Falls, it was seen as an obstacle for the core.

Sendzik said Clickback moving into the building is a great example of an opportunity that's presenting itself in a positive way.

"It's a best-case scenario. We've got a hometown business success who's now laying down even further roots in the community to really be a part of the revitalization of downtown St. Catharines."

Tkachuk said the company, which could be based anywhere because of the nature of the business, has been downtown since 2007. It wanted to stay downtown when looking for a new location after seeing a lot of great things happen there.

"We would have felt bad leaving now when so much positive has come to the downtown core with the Meridian Centre, with the performing arts centre, the cleanup and revitalization of St. Paul Street, just a lot of great things going on," he said.

"Our team and our staff have seen that, enjoy it and wanted to remain downtown."

Tkachuk was attracted to the former police building because of the architecture, which he said is innovative in its own way with floors that angle out rather than being a



JANIE JOSSAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

110 James Street, the former home of the headquarters for the Niagara Regional Police, has been sold.

perfectly square facade.

The company hopes to move in at the end of May or early June after doing some renovations. Tkachuk said the company has already talked to potential tenants who are keen on the plan for the building and thinks it won't have a problem filling it.

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LOCAL NEWS

Data to assist in targeting areas

FROM PAGE 2

Jaeger said the data will allow public health to target specific issues in the region and start to figure which Niagara communities need the most help.

"I don't think you will see a change in the programs we are already delivering," she said. "We will still have our staff people doing those programs. But I think what you will eventually see is more fluidity in terms of new programs as we are able to target specific issues."

The Life Course report will also help the region when it comes to lobbying the provincial government for health care funding, said Niagara Region chair Alan Caslin. Much like the GO Transit file, where the region brought a robust, data driven case to Queen's Park to prove the need for GO Trains in Niagara.

"You are able to make a much more compelling case when you

have the data laid out like this," Caslin said. "We are going to be able to bring this to the LIIN (the Local Health Integration Network which funds health care in Niagara) and really demonstrate the need in a way we haven't been able to before."

Caslin said the report will also help build Niagara's case for other projects, including the bid for the 2020 Canada Day Games.

If the games came to Niagara, sports facilities will need to be built or upgraded, and Caslin said part of the bid will be about the legacy of those facilities.

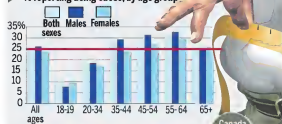
He said the Life Course report shows Niagara's need for improved venues that can be used by the community after the games, and that can encourage parents and children to be more active.

glaiche@postmedia.com
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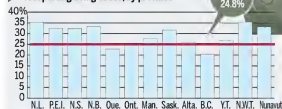
We're getting fatter

One in four adult Canadians are obese, according to a new report from Statistics Canada. And that proportion has increased 17.5% since 2003.

► % reporting being obese, by age group



► % reporting being obese, by province



Source: Statistics Canada

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LOCAL NEWS

Memorable send-off for special constable

BILL SAWCHUK
Postmedia Network

For years, Special Constable Rick Gordon has worked make sure civilian members of the Niagara Regional Police Service had a voice.

The court escort supervisor retired after a 30-year career at the end of January — but he is leaving with more than the best wishes of friends and colleagues.

Centre) operators that give us the background we need when we are heading to a call, such as whether the person has a history of violence toward the police or mental health issues.

"They play vital roles. Without civilian members, we would have to increase our

officers by 50 per cent to cover the duties."

There are about 350 civilian members of Niagara Regional Police who work alongside the service's 750 sworn officers.

Gordon began his career with the Niagara Regional Police in the licensing bureau

and almost immediately took a leadership role with the police association, the union which represents Niagara's rank-and-file officers and civilian staff.

"That he has made a difference for civilian and all members cannot be exaggerated," said Leanne McClay, the asso-

ciation's CAO and general counsel, who wrote the letter nominating Gordon for the award. "He truly did, and he did so with a passion that was evident in both word and deed."

Story continued on Page 16



RICK GORDON

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That he has made a difference for civilian and all members cannot be exaggerated."

Leanne McClay, Niagara Region Police Association

Gordon is this year's recipient of a prestigious provincial award. The John Walker Award, given out by the Police Association of Ontario, recognizes police association members whose actions exemplify leadership, devotion and sacrifice in the face of adversity. He will receive the award in May.

Gordon, a St. Catharines native, is sharing the award with Oranville police Const. James Giovannetti, an advocate for improved responses to post-traumatic stress disorder within the policing workplace.

It is the first time the award has been shared.

Cliff Priest, president of the Niagara Region Police Association, said the civilian members Gordon represented are an "integral part of the working machine that is modern policing."

"They are often unseen, but it is like a jigsaw puzzle," he said. "If you take one piece out, we can't function."

"They are people like our dispatchers that provide the information that gets us to the calls. They are our CPIC (Canadian Police Information

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Rocket launcher seized at border crossing

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

A rocket launcher and two grenades seized at the Peace Bridge last summer were just a few of the thousands of items confiscated by border officials in 2016.

The Canada Border Services Agency last week released its 2016 year in review, which sold more than 10.5 million cars, 52,000 buses and 3.3 million commercial trucks were processed by border officers in the Southern Ontario Region.

The Southern Ontario Region covers the cities of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Windsor, Sarnia, and London, and surrounding communities.

All told, the CBSA processed more than 25 million

travellers entering southern Ontario in 2016. Officers conducted more than 173,000 examinations which resulted in:

1,383 drug seizures, including 68 kg of cocaine;
218 firearms and 868 prohibited weapons seized;
4,056 litres of alcohol and 201

201 tobacco seizures;
13 child porn seizures; and

10 proceeds of crime seizures valued at \$373,600.

The disposable rocket launcher and two grenades were seized July 3 after agents discovered the items inside the vehicle of two Louisiana residents. The men did not have any documentation stating the launcher was deactivated and the grenades inert.

Niagara Regional Police

were called in to assist and an investigation determined the items were unusable.

The items were seized and the men were allowed to proceed into Canada.

Other unusual seizures made last year included a woolly mammoth tusk discovered in a vehicle at a Windsor border crossing.

"The men and women of the CBSA perform valuable work ensuring the detection and interdiction of illicit persons and products while expediting the free flow of legitimate travel and trade," said CBSA spokesman Rick Comerford.

Officers also intercepted 70 drinking or drug impaired drivers and recovered three missing children.

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Psychiatrist stripped of licence, reprimanded

GRANT LAFICHE
Postmedia Network

A former St. Catharines psychiatrist has been stripped of his medical licence by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario for what the college deemed was "sexual abuse" of a patient.

On Jan. 16, the college revoked Dr. Michael Porter of his licence to a reprimand hearing into Toronto.

The revocation of Porter's licence was ordered in September 2016 and the formal reprimand was enacted at the hearing this month. Porter was disciplined after repeatedly hugging a patient in a manner that, in the view of the college, "went beyond purported therapeutic hugs."

"The committee accepted that the hugs were tender and mutually satisfying, reflecting an enjoyable, romantic gesture," says an earlier February 2016 decision. "This, in the committee's view accords with the meaning of 'sexual nature,' in the legislation. These hugs were wrong especially in the psychotherapy context and in the committee's view, constitute sexual abuse."

Porter could not be reached for comment and he did not attend the January hearing. He is not facing any criminal charges.

In the text of the January reprimand provided by college spokeswoman Tracey Sobers, the college said it was "dismayed and profoundly disappointed" in Porter.

"You have failed to grasp the most fundamental tenet of the profession — that the practice of medicine is about serving the needs of the patient, not your own," the reprimand reads. "The committee is of the firm opinion that no penalty short of revocation could adequately protect the public while expressing the censure of the profession."

The college summary of the case says that Porter was treating a woman, identified only as Patient A, from 2008 to 2011.

"Patient A testified that Dr. Porter first hugged her about a year and a half after [she] started seeing him, when she was dwelling on the death of her relative. She thought Dr. Porter felt bad for her because her relative had passed away and so he said 'Here, let me give you a hug.' After that, she said they would hug just before she saw him," reads the decision.

The college said due to a past disciplinary decision against Porter, he was required to have all of his therapy sessions recorded by a video camera and the footage "preserved for inspection."

"The hugs which were captured

on video were initiated by Dr. Porter by standing and holding his arms open, welcoming Patient A to the embrace. Dr. Porter would generally stand in an area or move to behind his chair where the video was unlikely to fully capture the hug," the decision says.

Patient A further testified that eventually she and Porter would say "I love you," after a hug and on at least three occasions, she said Porter kissed her.

The decision says Porter denies any kissing happened.

"The committee carefully reviewed the evidence available and considered the credibility of both Patient A and Dr. Porter. The committee found that Dr. Porter kissed Patient A, that he held her hand in the hallway of his office, and that she sat on his lap in his office on one or more occasions," the decision reads.

The patient also testified that Porter made sexual comments to her. Porter denied he made such comment, the decision reads, but the college accepted the patient's testimony to be accurate.

The college further says it found that Porter disclosed to Patient A inappropriate information about his own personal life and information about two other patients. It also found he did not preserve all the video of his patient interactions as previously ordered by the college.

In its January reprimand, the college said Porter had caused Patient A harm and "it is through no restraint on your part that it did

not continue and worsen."

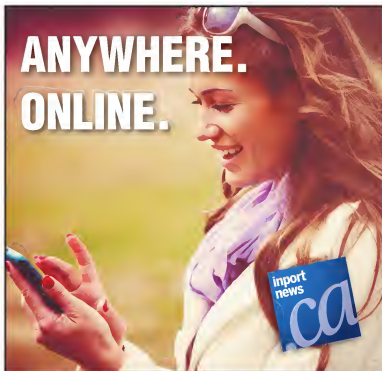
"You have shattered her trust, not only in you, but in the profession as a whole and, further, in those who would attempt to her in the future."

"While you are not present to

hear our condemnation, the committee has no doubt that it will be conveyed to you and, perhaps even more important, to your victim or victims, to the profession and to the public whose trust you betrayed."

The full college decision can be found at www.cpso.on.ca/public-register/doctor-details.aspx?view=4&id=%2058683.

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Gordon served with dedication in Niagara

FROM PAGE 13

During his tenure with the association, he helped form the National Association of Police Professionals and worked to get a civilian director's seat on the Canadian Police Association.

Gordon then sat as the Ontario appointee to the Canadian association for two terms.

As chair of the Niagara asso-

ciation's occupational health and safety committee, he was involved in a battle that ended up at the Ontario Labour Board and resulted in ballistic barriers for front desk civilian and uniform personnel.

It is something he was still fighting for as he retired. The association believes the protection is lacking at the new Niagara Regional Police headquarters in Niagara Falls.

"In his entire association career, Rick has never shied away from adversity, but has risen to the representational challenge that it presents," McClay said. "He has served all of the members, local, provincial and federal with commitment, dedication and true leadership."

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Fake IDs result in month in jail

ALISON LANOLEY
Postmedia Network

While his client admitted he used two sets of fake IDs to try to get his hands on two iPhones, a lawyer claimed the 46-year-old man is not a criminal.

"He is not a sophisticated man. He is not a criminal. He's somebody who got involved in a criminal enterprise out of desperation," the lawyer told Judge Ann Watson after Carlo Visani pleaded guilty last Wednesday to sev-

eral fraud-related offences in an Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines.

Court heard Visani went to a Rogers store in Niagara Falls in August 2016 and used a fake driver's licence and social insurance card to try to get a new iPhone 6.

The employee, however, recognized Visani as the subject of a fraud alert that had been issued by head office. Later that same day, Visani went to another Rogers outlet, this time in Welland, and attempted to pull the same

scam. The clerk at that store also recognized him.

Court heard Visani, who had never been involved in the law in the past, was "low on the totem pole" in the criminal enterprise and was not involved in the manufacturing of the phony identification.

While the judge agreed Visani may have played a minor role in the scam, he was still culpable and imposed a 27-day jail term to be served on weekends.



Old textbooks effecting change

The Heart and Stroke Foundation is launching Textbooks for Change, a new initiative which donates

used textbooks to post-secondary schools in Kenya and sells at an affordable rate to North American students.

The organization says 50 per cent of the books are donated to East African university libraries. The rest are sold to North American students at a cheaper rate, with proceeds going to local impact initiatives such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation, or they are properly recycled. The foundation will be collecting textbooks of any

subject throughout February, coinciding with its annual Heart Month campaign. Each textbook collected will earn a \$1 donation for the organization.

The books can be dropped off at either Niagara College campus student administrative council office, at Brock University's Student Life and Community Experience office or at the local Heart and Stroke Foundation Niagara office in St. Catharines. For further information, visit textbooksforchange.com.

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Early spring predicted at halfway mark

RAY SPITERI
Postmedia Network

Mother Nature has been kind to Niagara so far this winter.

The region has seen warmer than normal temperatures and below normal snowfall amounts during the first seven weeks of the season.

"This January, the average daytime high for the month was 2.4 and the average daytime high in January is -0.2," said Mark Schuster, meteorologist with Environment Canada.

"It's definitely warmer than normal, but nothing that hasn't happened in the past. It's not unprecedented."

Schuster said snowfall amounts have been "quite a bit" below normal "just because the temperatures were so warm."

"Pretty much across all of southern Ontario it's been this way. A lot of the precipitation in January actually came in the form of rain."

He said January started off fairly cold, so there was more snow, particularly in lake effect areas.

"They got a lot of snow in

the opening few days of the month, but then, once we started trending towards daytime highs above zero, we were more in a rainy and drizzly and foggy pattern."

Schuster said the start of February has produced more typical winter conditions "and it looks like that might stick around for the next week or two."

"It looks like temperatures are going to be near normal to maybe slightly below, but it doesn't look like there's any major arctic outbreaks in the near future, so no -20s or anything like that."

He said temperatures may go a bit above normal towards the second half of February.

"It's hard to say exactly by how much at this point — will it be five degrees above normal, or two degrees above normal? It's always hard to tell. That's still far out. It's a lot easier to predict the next week or so as opposed to the next month."

David Phillips, senior climatologist with Environment Canada, said 50-55 centimetres of snow has fallen in Niagara so far this winter, compared to the normal 80-85



BOB TYMCZYK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

A tourist adjusts after taking a selfie in front of ice-covered trees near Table Rock in Niagara Falls Thursday. The Niagara region has seen warmer than normal temperatures and below normal snowfall amounts during the first seven weeks of the season.

centimetres.

"We've seen more rain. We had almost more than double the amount of rain in January," he said.

"Overall January was more like March. We had only six days where the temperature got below -10. We normally had 14 of those suckers. January turned out to be warmer than December — that rarely happens. January is usually the coldest month, the snowiest month and it was totally missing in action."

He said residents are also

saving on their home heating bills, with the average cost down by 10 per cent.

"There just wasn't the demand."

Meanwhile, Canadian celebrity groundhogs Wiarton Willie and Shubenacadie Sam did not see their shadow last Thursday morning, predicting an early spring.

But American groundhog Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, signalling six more weeks of winter.

Schuster said defining an early spring is "very subjective"

"This is always an interesting question to get because when you ask people what their definition of an early spring is, there is no (consistent answer)," he said.

Schuster said he asked co-workers and friends how they would define an early spring.

He said some people said when the snow is melting and it is muddy. Another person said when the daytime high is a bit above zero. Somebody else said when there are buds on the trees and the birds are singing and the grass is green.

"There is really no official definition of what an early spring is, so it's always a hard one to answer. In these parts of the world if you get six more weeks of winter, that is an early spring because six more weeks of winter brings you close to the first day of spring, which this year is on March 20. If you're getting spring-like weather by then, you're doing pretty well in southern Ontario."

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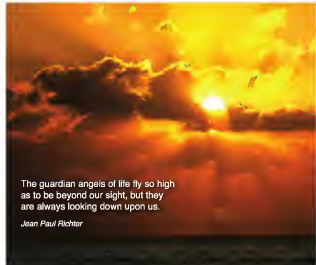
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